

GUIDE TO ELECTION OF GOVERNING BODY POLICY TEMPLATE

ABOUT THIS POLICY AREA

This policy guides how the organisation elects its board or management committee.

A written election of governing body policy is required as part of meeting Standard 11 (Governance and accountability).

Standard 11 — governance and accountability

The organisation develops, implements and reviews procedures for the election of its governing body.

Policy checklist

The following checklist will help you check that an existing policy covers this area adequately.

The policy should:

- say who is eligible to stand for nomination to the governing body
- explain how people can nominate for election to the governing body
- explain the procedure for conducting elections for the governing body
- show how these procedures reflect the legal requirements and the organisation's constitution
- contain clear procedures and actions
- indicate the timing of any actions
- show when it was approved
- show when it was last reviewed.

COMPLETING YOUR ELECTION OF GOVERNING BODY POLICY

Using the policy template

The template provides some example statements. You can adapt these statements and include them in your policy or write your own statements to better suit the operations and services of your organisation.

To customise the policy template, click on the shaded sections **<<Insert text>>** and insert the information that is specific to your organisation.

When you have completed the policy template, delete the shaded instruction sections such as: [Refer to the election of governing body policy template guide for questions and/or examples to consider when customising this section.](#)

For further information on using the policy guides, refer to the information in *Using the policy templates and guides*.

Guidelines for each section of your policy

1. Purpose

When identifying the purpose of the policy, consider how it might apply to the way your organisation elects its board or management committee and to how it seeks new board or management committee members. The organisation may seek to recruit members for the board or management committee from particular communities, or with particular skills, expertise or attributes. Do you need to make specific statements to ensure you are inclusive of particular groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Australian South Sea Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability?

2. Scope

In determining the scope of this policy, consider whether there are any circumstances in which this policy would not apply.

3. Policy statement

If you are adopting the policy statement in the template, consider whether there are any additional commitments your organisation wants to make.

In identifying the actions your organisation will take to implement this policy, you should include the following:

- seeking nominations from eligible members to stand for election to the board or management committee
- conducting an election of board or management committee members in accordance with the requirements of incorporation and the organisation's constitution
- formally appointing new members of the board or management committee
- formally appointing new members of the board or management committee to casual vacancies as required by the organisation's constitution.

4. Procedures

The procedures describe how your organisation achieves the aims and goals you have outlined in your purpose, scope and policy statement.

4.1 Seeking nominations

Describe who is eligible to stand for election, and how the organisation will call for nominations. This should include notifying all organisation members who are eligible to nominate and/or vote of the process for nomination, the timeframe for nomination and the contact person.

The organisation may also consider:

- providing a standard nomination form
- asking nominees to document their relevant skills and experience
- providing prospective nominees with an information kit about the role and responsibilities of being on the board or management committee.

Nominations should be formally submitted to the organisation's secretary or returning officer.

4.2 Conducting elections

Election procedures must comply with the organisation's constitution, and should be briefly outlined in this procedure. The procedure should cover:

- period of notice required for the annual general meeting
- timing of sending information to the voting membership about the candidates
- whether voting will be postal or in person, and, if in person, whether proxy votes are allowed and limits on proxy vote numbers
- appointment of a returning officer
- procedure for disputed results.

4.3 Appointing new board or management committee members

Following the election, all board or management committee members should be given a formal notice of appointment or renewal of appointment. If the organisation is a company limited by guarantee, directors are required to sign an 'agreement to act' as a director.

4.4 Appointing members to casual vacancies

Describe how casual vacancies are to be filled. This should reflect what is in the organisation's constitution.

5. Other related policies and documents

List the other policies related to the election of governing body policy. The policy should be linked to:

- induction of governing body policy
- training and development for governing body policy.

6. Review processes

Consider how often the policy should be reviewed and the process for doing this:

- **frequency of review:** Most policies benefit from an annual review. The experience of implementing the policy is used to decide which changes are necessary. Consider reviewing your election of governing body policy as part of an annual review of your organisation's governance-related policies or, if your organisation is small, perhaps over a three-year period. Critical incidents may prompt you to review the policy ahead of schedule.
- **responsibility for the review:** In most organisations, the board or management committee would be responsible for reviewing this policy in consultation with organisation members.
- **process for the review:** Decide which particular staff, volunteers, external people and organisations will provide input to the policy review, and whether clients will be involved.
- **decision-making process:** Who will review draft changes to the policy and approve changes? What will be the timeframe for the review process?
- **documentation and communication:** What records of the policy review process are needed? How will changes to the policy be communicated to staff implementing the policy? In a small organisation, this may be as simple as noting the changes at a staff meeting. In a larger organisation, an email memo may be needed.
- **key questions for the review:** Is the policy being implemented? Are procedures being followed? Is the policy clear? What has changed that may prompt a change to the policy? Have particular stakeholders had difficulty with any aspect of the policy? Can their concerns be resolved? How does the policy compare with that of similar organisations?